

First Galactic Conflict - Recounts

by Andrithir

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Summary: An epistolary novel which recounts the personal stories of those involved in the war against the Flood. (Based off "Lost Legacy")

1. Introduction

"**First" Galactic Conflict Chronicles**

Introduction

My name is Alice Elizabeth Samson, callsign Corona. For the past few years, I have been collecting and writing reports about the Council/Coalition Alliance-Reaper/Flood ("CARF") War. But that galactic conflict goes by many names, the media call it the "First" Galactic Conflict (GC-1). Others call it the Tide Crisis and other less flattering names.

We, the people at ONI call it CAR-F or Caref War. Ironic that when you add another "ree" at the end, it becomes Carefree? But thankfully we didn't have the _carefree_ attitude. We're ONI, and we've seen how bad things can get. If everyone unanimously agrees on one thing, it's the job of the last guy to disagree and get to the absolute truth, no matter what. That stance saved us so much grief in the past.

The Reapers, it was one of the greatest cover-ups or lost-in-translation moments of ONI. With so much happening in the Magellanic Clouds we didn't have the man power or resources for a full investigation of the Reaper Myth. Number crunching proved that the Reapers weren't a real threat; their file was lost in our vast expanse of archived information, collecting dust somewhere. Back then, the threat just seemed so small and insignificant, especially with the Insurrectionists running rampant in the outlying regions.

People think that ONI is an omnipotent clandestine power, in most

scenarios, it works in our favour, having a larger-than-life image. But if you combine all the conspiracies involving us over the span of our existence, well, it would say that we are more powerful than the Coalition. So yes, we were powerful, but we didn't have enough resources to go chasing a myth, while there were IEDs going off.

So when CAR-F War begun, we had already hit the ground running, but we knew we were going to lose momentum. Reapers had destroyed a lot of strategic positions in their pacification campaign, leaving us with very little to stop the Flood conventionally.

I've already written a formal report about the war, but I do think that it is appropriate that I document my interviews, in order to preserve the essence of being sentient, the countless hours of labour, and retell the horrors of difficult decisions.

This record contains declassified information of the feared ONISAD-SOGs, Special Forces from all branches and factions, civilians from all walks of life, and politicians of every conglomerate.

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A/N: If you haven't noticed, it is an Epistolary novel I'm writing (Which is legal in the eyes of FF). It is centred around **_*Lost Legacy*_, in order to provide a deeper depth in to the 'verse I've created.**

2. Commander Sarah Palmer

**Commander Sarah Palmer**

[Commander Sarah Palmer has an illustrious military career under her belt. Her exemplary performance had earned her the position of CO of the Spartan Branch. According to most, Palmer was seen as an arrogant woman. However, what many failed to realise, was that her "arrogant" demeanour was required to reign in conceited Spartan-IVs. In private, she is an admirable and even friendly woman, who has a soft spot for puppies.

She asked that I conduct this interview at the Red Mountain Restaurant on Earth, at night. Its interior was a white on mahogany timber design, and it had a beautiful commanding view of the city stretched onto the plateau bellow. The city was designed as a Garden City, and though it still had a long way to go before reaching its former glory, it already had its light pollution annulment generators online, allowing us to see the starry night.

The interview as a semi-formal/casual sort of thing, so I was dressed in an appropriate dark grey business suit with a pencil skirt, suited for the warm summer night. Sarah was dressed similarly, but had a white blouse and the sleeves rolled up. She looked well rested, but weary. It still surprises me to this day, how well a person can blend in with the right clothing. Palmer is the tallest person in this restaurant by far, but no one gives her a second glance.]

War is never straight forward, it is never that simple. You'd expected a war between to vastly different groups would all boil down

to just warfare, no political bullshit. But there I was, in the thick of black ops and politics. I just remember it being that Spartans would be deployed, solely for the purpose of taking the Reapers head on.

[Pause]

Then one day, I was transferred to become a liaison for ONISAD. I don't know what came over me that day. I had a lot against the SOGs. Too many times have I been the one on clean up duty for of their Ops. You could tell from the precision of the carnage, that certain things were their work.

[Takes a drink of water]

SOGs cycle through a lot of cover names, to the point they start addressing each other by callsigns. Still, to this day, I have no idea why I joined them.

**Any ideas why you accepted?**

He asked me the same thing.

**He?**

Team leader of the team I was assigned to. He'd done his homework, knew his stuff, and was confused to why someone like me **[gestures quotation symbols]** "would want to come out of the mud to jump into the guts".

**What was your answer?**

Curiosity. I signed up into their world, because of curiosity. Sure, there was that inkling sense that going into their world would allow me to make some kind of difference.

**But?**

He said that the work they do doesn't change anything, but rather stops things from changing.

**Keeping things in balanceâ€|**

Yes. Working with them, I began to see what these men give. You know I was the first woman amongst their ranks?

**As an Element, it wasn't official, but it was big news.**

I guessed as much. I never got the full slice of the pie, but I got enough to know that it's like. It tastes good at first, being a part of the top tier, but then it grows bland. Half the time, it isn't even warfare.

**What happened when it was?**

It was when the Flood showed up. I won't lie; fighting the Flood always haunts me, why? Because they're like zombies with some semblance of a brain left. Some nights, I wake up from a bad dream, seeing people being assimilated. Funnily enough, the SOGs didn't seem to badly affected. They still had their precision, albeit more

brutality. When they ripped off a combat's form head, I thought it would be messy, but it was surprisingly clean. The Flood changed everyone in some way. Airborne and ODSTs kept their distances instead of charging into the fray, and SOGs took the fight up close and personal, rather than take everything out from a distance.

**Did you see any of the Elements die?**

A few, Sixth copped it badly. Parangosky played them, they never made it out. A guy from my group bought it too. The rest of the Elements just weren't the same when he was gone. All the anger and coldness just left their eyes, and was replaced by something else entirely. Defeat, despair, resignation, something like that, but worse.
**[Pauses] **They had given up so much already, and I guess the war tipped them over the edge.

**The Control Scandal?**

Yes.

**Where do you think they are now?**

If they're still alive, they'd still be there.

**Why is that?**

"Death's to easy," they say. I read the ballad that is placed in their private memorial. It's hard to forget those words.

"This is the life we chose
>This is the life we lead
The consequences are ours to bear
>The burdens of our actions falls to us, alone
Every decision, we must accept the outcome
>Even if, we are not aware of it
By choice, this is what we do

>And look at what we choose to give
We give everything
>So that others may live
In ignorant bliss"

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3. Anna Greenfield

**Anna Greenfield**

[Anna Greenfield has invited me to an apartment in New Sydney for this interview. It is neat, tidy and well decorated to give it a homey feel. Greenfield has spent her entire career working for ONI, and has lived through the reigns of numerous directors.]

What can I say? One day it was Parangosky, next day it was Osman. I seriously have no idea where Osman came out from, but it was like she was promoted from Captain to Admiral overnight, those types of things don't happen often, and I can tell you right now that Osman wasn't qualified for that promotion. We all know that Parangosky bought it at some point, and that was why Osman got to be director. But none of us knew that Osman would cryogenically preserve Parangosky. When Keyes developed a way to revive those on the brink of death, Parangosky came back. Ironic isn't it? How everything happens.

**What do you mean?**

****[Anna chuckles]****

Halsey and Parangosky had always been at odds with each other. It was why Keyes didn't have a skyrocketing career like his father and sister. But he is one of the most brilliant people in the organisation. He's the epitome, the personification of what ONI needs to be. He developed so many things that improved humanity as a whole, but unfortunately, what he developed, what he created, helped bring back the woman that caused us a whole lot of grief. Parangosky was bad, Osman was worse. Osman had arrogance, and pushed Keyes a lot. When Parangosky came back, it was less work on Keyes. Still, after his accomplishments he only remained a Lieutenant Colonel for most of his careerâ€œ c'mon you'd have to be dumb not to see that. Parangosky and Osman didn't want Keyes getting clout.

**But he's director now.**

And it shows. You'd be surprised that when ONI was run by "civilians" we always got a lot more work done as they focused on the political aspect of things. More targeted killings and economic sabotage and less airstrikes. We had fewer casualties when they were running thingsâ€œ but they were more ruthless, amazingly.

**What about Osman and Parangosky in particular?**

When Keyes took over, you saw a difference. ONI was no longer hellbent on personal vendettas; those were Osman's and Parangosky's thing. Keyes made sure everything was manageable and in check. He had a more diplomatic approach, knew exactly where to send people. He always factored in everything; his style of calculation is different to his predecessors.

**So what you're saying is, Osman and Parangosky practically tore the organisation apart because of personal vendettas?**

Yes. Osman was arrogant, ruthless, she wasn't qualified to become director. She ignored ONI Chiefs, hell half of them had no idea what was going on at the time. Keyes managed to stay in the loop because he was Head of Section-Three. If it wasn't for him, HighCom would've scrapped and restructured ONI.

**Isn't that what happened though?**

Partially, we had more civilians like me, working the desks and analysing data. ONI became less military, but they still had a strong presence. Parangosky kept ONI stable, I'll give her that, but Osman nearly brought us down.

**So how is Keyes as Director, really?**

Fewer casualties, easier hours, greater overall efficiency, and less psychiatrists are needed. SOGs aren't sent into high-risk round the clock.

**Thoughts on the war?**

I'm not going to lie; Parangosky had a pretty solid plan in mind. I

guess if she was to succeed, things would've been different. But because she failed to notify even a quarter of ONISAD, that's where the problems started coming in. I don't know why she wanted to keep her plan hidden in the first place.

**Cerberus's crimes against sentient life, maybe?**

Well, after she had her plans up and running, sure. But before, when everything was in preliminary, she could've told us. We could've saved a lot more people.

****[Anna closes her eyes for a moment. It's clear to me that she had lost a lot of close friends during the Cerberus Scandal]****

We could've saved more people. I lost too many friends because of Parangosky and Osman, not the war.

**When the war was in full swing, what were you doing?**

Everyone had to be devoted to the war effort, so I was helping out with ONI logistics and monitoring COM traffic.

**Were you Zeta Band COM Handler?**

****[Anna nods, and wipes a tear]****

We heard everything, but we weren't allowed to respond to distress signals. We just analysed COM traffic and redirected assets that were on Zeta Band. Everyone else, we were ordered to ignore them. I can still hear their screams and cries for help.

****[Anna begins to cry openly]****

I can still hear that baby girl crying for help, just old enough to know what's happening, but young enough to be wide eyed. She was begging _me_ to help her. But I couldn't, _there were more important things_. She was all alone, and I had _more important things_.

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****A/N: To answer your question, ONISAD is divided into two groups, Special Operations Group and Political Actions Group.****

4. Commander Jane Shepard

**Commander Jane Shepard**

****[She is by far, one of the most distinguished people in the Alliance. Her academic and combat performance earned her a Summa Cum Laude at the N7 Academy. However, despite her skills and attributes, she is still **_**human**_**. Her military record is impressive, but is still laced with the horrors of war. She had seen her entire command wiped out by attrition, or one savage strike. She had seen the mutilated dead around the galaxy, and she is by no means, a stranger to the entrails of war.**]**

****It is known that Commander Jane Shepard was the one who gave Commander-117 John Neil Richards (name declassified), a place of**

refuge and purpose aboard her ship. This was still a time when IEDs were going off in Coalition held space. Plans for returning to Earth, were still in the preliminary stages.**

I am here with Jane, at Westminster Fields on the Greater Ark. It is a beautiful place, orderly, yet natural. The setting sun casted a calm glow over the sparsely populated beach.

Shepard is wearing an appropriate set of swimming/beach attire, her brown hair is still wet, and clung to her skin. The green and blue patterns that ran along her body, as well as the swirling mist of turquoise in her eyes, give her a surreal angelic look.

Like a loving mother, she's cradling her baby son with utmost care, having his head rest near the nape of her neck. I must add, it is one of the more beautiful and adorable things I've seen.]

I've never really snapped before, I've come close to quitting, but never broke down. The war **[strokes her son's forehead]** it, well, half the time it was just trying to find our bearings. Funny how it all started out as a routine shakedown run, next thing I knew, I was the first human Spectre and my orders were to hunt down the Spectre's best, Saren Arterius. One hell of a ride, but I made a lot of good friends on the way.

[Shepard rocks her son gently]

Never thought that it would go from Saren Arterius, to Cerberus and the Collectors, to the Reapers and finally the Flood. One fucked up thing after another. But at least John showed up when he did. I was so grateful to have someone like him on board. Made a lot of things faster, gave me and my people more down time.

[Pause]

But when the UNSC showed up, I thought the war with the Reapers would be a short one. True that. Instead of fighting sentient space ships, I was now fighting corrupt paramilitary operatives. And after fighting them, I was up against the space zombies who had claimed the Reaper "reserves". Hundreds of millions of ships, against a few hundred thousand.

Terrible odds huh?

That's an understatement. But from what I gathered, armed response was much better than the Forerunners. Immediate deployment of Halo Arrays and heavy weapons. But since the Flood could assimilate anything with biomass or a CPU, the Arrays could only do so much. It was a war of attrition, where the side with the best production industry would win. Except, the Flood didn't need to have logistics. They were the Flood! water! Diseased water. Water flows and seeps, it's intentions unclearâ€ no pun intended.

The Flood could adapt to any kind of warfare.

Exactly. They sap and drown your strength, allowing them to grow stronger. How do you fight a something like that? The Arrays can only do so much. Whenever we're about to fire, they retreat back into slipspace. Of course there are times when the Array works, but the opportunities for it to be fully effective is near zero most of the

time.

**You were at the heart of the Cerberus Control Scandal, weren't you?**

I guess you could say that, after all, they did bring me back from the dead. But when we were at Omega, so much happened I could barely keep track. Everything was just happening so fast. One moment we were on the offensive, retaking the station, next thing I know, the whole place is coming down on top of us.

**What happened?**

Contingency plans, something that the SOGs could've never find. Deep seismic charges in the asteroid, followed by a slipspace flux, Omega had a Forerunner artefact on it, small enough to avoid detection, but big enough to cause damage. When those charges went off, it activated the artefact, causing the entire station to be pulled out of orbit and towards Bindur. Amazing isn't it? A Forerunner artefact, that close for so long.

**Bindur was a Forerunner Shield World.**

I figured that out as much. I can't count how many lives were aboard the station before it crashlanded _inside_ the planet. When that happened, it really hit the fan. Bindur was also a Research Installationâ€| well, I'd rather not talk about it.

****[Her son stirs in her arms. Shepard coos silently to calm her child]****

**How old is he?**

Nine months.

**You deserve him.**

****[Shepard smiles weakly]****

I hope so. I lost a lot of good friends in the war.

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****A/N: Any questions or queries? Please review.****

End
file.